

DRAFT VISION ZERO PLAN

JANUARY 26TH Q&A

This document summarizes the Question and Answer segment of the draft Vision Zero Plan virtual public meeting, held on January 26th, 2022. The questions and answers here reflect a summary of the conversation, with additional context and information added. Additionally, replies to questions that could not be addressed during the meeting time are included here. We want to extend our thanks to everyone who participated. Please continue to submit your questions, comments, ideas, and suggestions to VisionZero@Nashville.gov through February 4th. Your ideas and enthusiasm are our greatest asset!

Questions and Answers

How will we actually change our culture and the way Nashville designs its streets to promote the paradigm shift needed to create a vision zero network?

The first step is the adoption of the Nashville Vision Zero Plan. Although we have always prioritized safety, we're initiating a renewed commitment that looks beyond the immediate conditions of a crash and focuses on a safe systems approach to prevent fatal crashes. In comparison to a more traditional approach that designs roadway environments to function best when users follow precise rules; a safe system approach preemptively accounts for human error. People are not perfect! People make mistakes, and when they do, our safety systems should be in place to prevent traffic-related deaths.

I take nothing away from all you are doing—it is all so important. However, I believe you are omitting a major, major component! When I was growing up, my parents taught me to watch out for cars! These days, most pedestrians don't even look up before stepping out to cross a street! Many have their noses buried in their cell phones. How about some much-needed pedestrian education!? Look before you walk!

Also, last I knew, bicycle riders are obligated to follow the same laws as any other wheeled vehicle. In my neighborhood, I very rarely see a bike rider stop at a stop sign! Please, let's have some pedestrian/bike-rider education!

Education for all road users is an important theme within Vision Zero and we have several education-focused strategies in the draft plan. However, national research shows that the education is most impactful when paired with design and policy strategies. Lewis Leff with the City of Austin shared that in his years of examining crash reports, distracted pedestrians and bicyclists were very rarely the cause of a crash. One of our guiding principles in the draft Vision Zero Plan states that "Street design should account for human error and be predictable". While the plan identifies key strategies to ensure that all users are educated on the rules of the road, it's also a priority to ensure that when mistakes happen, lives aren't lost.

Adding more crosswalks would be great to keep pedestrians safe. Is it possible to add some type of light or signal when a person either begins to walk across a street or while they are walking? So many people that are out at night are not wearing reflective clothing, so it can be difficult to see people walking without adequate lighting.

Enhanced pedestrian lighting is a key strategy in the Vision Zero Plan. Our draft strategies plan to address this, to include adding HAWK (High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk Beacon) signals where feasible, increasing the presence of pedestrian-scale lighting along the High Injury Network, encouraging safe user behaviors at night, and exploring innovative crosswalk and bus stop lighting technologies.

Design is critical to affecting driver behavior. What are NDOT and TDOT's plans for addressing known problem areas (such as the pikes) as well as a culture of speeding citywide? We are on track for dozens of fatalities on our most dangerous arterials by end of year.

Managing speed is the most important intervention we can make to protect the most vulnerable road users, people walking and biking. Reducing vehicle speeds is a priority action for Vision Zero in Nashville because speed is the number one predictor of survival in the case of a crash. Last year, Nashville Mayor John Cooper implemented the Neighborhood Speed Limit Reduction initiative to lower residential speed limits from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour in the Urban Services District - which includes most Nashville neighborhoods. There are additional strategies in the plan to address speed, including evaluating design speed policies, implementing traffic calming best practices into our roadway design, conducting automated enforcement along the High Injury Network, limiting free flow right turn movements, updating design standards, and more.

Based on the data presented, the most dangerous corridors in Nashville are the pikes (Gallatin, Dickerson, Nolensville, Clarksville, etc). These roads have in common that they are high speed (35-40mph posted speed limit), wide (4-5 lanes of car traffic), but quite dense in terms of businesses, restaurants, and bus stops. What are we going to do to improve the experience on these roads? And how can we make change happen quickly?

The draft High Injury Network (HIN) identifies where the most severe crashes are occurring in Nashville. Due to Davidson County's changing building landscape, the pikes carry a significant amount of vehicular traffic and are also essential transit routes. Each pike is unique, and one of the immediate steps identified in the plan will be to audit the most dangerous segments of the HIN, examine individual crash reports in detail, and identify context-sensitive solutions. We can't implement this plan in a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead we have to work with different stakeholders along the corridor and surrounding neighborhoods to identify solutions that will reflect local values, prioritize livability along the corridor and ultimately, save lives. This individual work on each corridor builds on TDOT's existing PRSI (Pedestrian Road Safety Initiative) program. We'll work together to identify both short-term, or quick build opportunities, and long-term solutions to reduce the severity and frequency of crashes in our County.

What role does enforcement have in Vision Zero? There is a frustration in many neighborhoods that the police are not effectively enforcing traffic laws.

Enforcement is a key component to the success of Vision Zero. The Nashville Police Department is our partner in our Vision Zero planning efforts. It is not just about enforcing the law but educating and encouraging everyone to make a fundamental change in our behavior when using the transportation system.

How is the population increase-housing development being evaluated as it impacts the already congested road ways in Nashville, such as in North Nashville?

Davidson County's building landscape plays a significant role in the success of our Vision Zero goals, especially along the pikes and in our suburban areas that are auto-oriented, have higher speeds, and often lack adequate walkways and bikeways. The plan identifies several policy and action steps surrounding this and transportation access to ensure areas that are experiencing increased developmental pressure are growing in a way that prioritizes safety.

Some cities have verbal crosswalks (crosswalks with audio cues letting people know when it is safe to cross). What would it take for Nashville to implement these here?

This is important not just for safety, but also for accessibility. Audible indicators are part of our current crosswalk deployments. Enhancing pedestrian crossings, particularly at the most dangerous intersections, is a priority in the Vision Zero Plan.

Where will the city get funding for high injury corridors and high injury intersections? Are there opportunities for Nashville to receive new IIJA (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) funding for Vision Zero projects?

NDOT is constantly evaluating opportunities to diversify funding sources and will continue to take advantage of new resources. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill has allocated \$5 billion for a "Safe Streets and Roads for all" grant program and while the specific details have yet to be confirmed, NDOT will work closely with the Greater Regional Nashville Council and TDOT to monitor federal funding opportunities.

Does separated bike infrastructure make it safer for all road users?

The short answer is, yes! Physical separation between bikers and drivers creates a safer street for everyone to travel. A 2019 study by researchers at the University of Colorado Denver and the University of New Mexico found that separated bike lanes resulted in fewer fatalities for every mode of travel. (<https://usa.streetsblog.org/2019/05/29/protect-yourself-separated-bike-lanes-means-safer-streets-study-says/>). Enhancing bicycle infrastructure is not just a strategy in the draft Vision Zero Plan, but also included in more detail in the 2022 WalkNBike plan update.

It looks like success hasn't been universal or dramatic. Los Angeles in particular saw a rise in deaths after adopting Vision Zero. DC reduced deaths only one year, but those went back up, following the national trend. Why do Vision Zero efforts fall short in some places? Are there lessons Nashville can learn from cities that are struggling to reduce injuries and deaths?

Vision Zero success requires a foundational change in how we think about transportation safety and true success will take many years of collaboration and dedication. We have the benefit of learning from other cities in the US and across the world to understand their successes and their failures. How we evaluate performance is a critical factor in Vision Zero. While we've seen citywide crash rates stay the same or in some cases increase in places like Los Angeles and DC, when conducting before/after evaluations of safety improvements at the project level, significant crash reductions have been achieved, such as the examples Lewis Leff shared from the City of Austin. We've also learned that the cities that are prioritizing speed reduction and integrating a safe systems approach to their roadway design strategies are achieving fewer and less severe crashes than those who focus solely on programmatic actions. In Nashville, we intend to approach this comprehensively and cooperatively. Our first step is the development of the Vision Zero Plan that outlines clear and distinct steps for addressing safety through policy, engineering, legislative actions, communications, education, performance measures, data management, and enforcement.

What is the plan on further engaging the community on vision zero/traffic calming initiatives, while understanding that many people don't understand (or possibly agree with) the best ways to improve road safety, and that more community engagement prolongs the time needed to implement needed safe infrastructure?

The mission of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhoods and Community Engagement is to improve the quality of life in Nashville's neighborhoods through a more informed, active and involved citizenry, and enhanced governmental response to community needs. Equitable engagement is a key priority for NDOT and the draft Vision Zero Plan. It identifies key strategies to foster collaboration, educate residents on the project implementation process, and ensures that decisions are not only data-driven, but also reflect the values and needs of the local community, especially in areas where residents may be more vulnerable to traffic deaths.

Resources

Nashville's Vision Zero Program

<https://www.nashville.gov/departments/transportation/plans-and-programs/vision-zero>

Austin's Vision Zero Program

<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/vision-zero>

The national Vision Zero Network

<https://visionzeronetwork.org/>

Approaches to enforcement

<https://visionzeronetwork.org/its-time-to-evolve-beyond-the-es-approach-to-traffic-safety/>

Pedestrian distraction

<https://visionzeronetwork.org/distracted-pedestrians-distracting-from-the-real-issues/>

Fixing deadly streets

<https://visionzeronetwork.org/we-know-how-to-fix-deadly-streets/>

Safe speed guidelines

<https://nacto.org/safespeeds/>

Federal speed limit guidelines

<https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/uslimits2/>

Protected bike lanes as a safety improvement

<https://usa.streetsblog.org/2019/05/29/protect-yourself-separated-bike-lanes-means-safer-streets-study-says/>